

INTERNET USE AND UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS' READING HABITS: CASE STUDY OF AJAYI CROWTHER UNIVERSITY, OYO, OYO STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study investigated the effect of the use of the Internet on students' reading habits. It employed descriptive survey methodology, with a questionnaire to gather data from 338 undergraduate students of Ajayi Crowther University through random sampling technique. It used the descriptive statistical techniques of frequency count, mean, and standard deviation to statistically analyse the data using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences. The findings showed that the respondents used the internet mainly to source educational materials to add to class notes (87.6%) and to develop their reading habits (87.3%). They spent a lot of time connected to the internet using 10 to 40 hours per week (75.8% - 81.7% of respondents) and maintained good reading habits in spite of long hours spent online. The study concluded that students can only cultivate good reading habits if the Internet is used mainly for educational/instructional purposes. It was therefore recommended: that institutions' information literacy/user education programme should focus on the benefits of Internet use to enhance reading habits; promotion of Internet use for educational/instructional purposes among students; that parents and guardians instil good reading habits in their children/wards from home and that institutions should support students to develop better reading habits through improved library collection and organising programmes such as storytelling, reading together, readership promotion campaigns, and formation of reading clubs.

Keywords: *Internet use, Reading, Reading habit, Reading interest, Reading culture, Undergraduate students.*

Introduction

The means of transportation for the data kept in files or documents on a computer is the Internet (Agil & Ahmad, 2011). It carries a variety of information and services, including email, online chat, file transfers, connected Web pages, and other World Wide Web publications. The teaching, research, and learning processes in academic institutions according to Jibrin, Musa and Shittu (2017) all greatly benefit from the use of the Internet.

It has an infinite supply of information resources that are concurrently and universally accessible and easily usable by everybody (Kumar & Kaur, 2006, referenced in Jibrin, Musa & Shittu, 2017). Jibrin, Musa and Shittu in their study revealed that one of the useful tools for academic activity in this era of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is the internet. If used correctly, it can be an invaluable instrument for learning, teaching, and research.

Reading is the core learning activity and the starting point for any programme promoting literacy. It is the process of understanding and acquiring knowledge for one's own personal development. Reading is an integral part of knowledge transfer, and reading regularly improves one's ability to use reading strategies in the classroom. In fact, according to the study results by Edem and Ofre (2010), the students recognised how critical reading was to their academic achievement. It is very crucial to academic success of any student. It takes coordination of a variety of related information sources to master the complicated skill of reading (Nnadozie & Egwim, 2010). It is, according to Edeole and Adejoke (2016, referenced in Akidi, Agbese & Chukwueke, 2021), the ability to interpret and comprehend written and printed words. It is the most effective approach of conscious learning that influences people's attitudes, morals, beliefs, judgement, and actions as well as the quantity and precision of information available to them.

Palani (2010) viewed reading habits as a crucial component of developing literate societies. The author claimed that it moulds a person's personality and aids in the development of sound thought processes and the generation of original ideas. Therefore, cultivating reading habits is significant to students' academic performance. Early adoption of reading habits is a crucial ability for knowledge acquisition, which is highly demanding in the life of every student in the academic environment. There is rising worry that the reading habit of Nigerians, particularly students, has considerably declined and that many of them have never borrowed or read a book from their school's library. Rather than cultivating reading habit, most students according to Dominic (2015) have turned their reading time into a period for watching movies, playing internet games, social media interactions with friends, etc. Statistics on university libraries' patronage show unequivocally that there is a correlation between the number of students using the library and examination periods.

Reading habits are ways individuals organise their reading (Davidovitch, Yavich, & Druckman, 2016 referenced in Abang Yusof, 2021). Reading habits will help students develop good study techniques, an understanding of various information sources, and memory capacity. An individual's reading habits are determined by how much, how frequently, when, why, and what they read (Rosli, Razali, Zamil, Noor & Baharuddin, 2017; Abang Yusof, 2021). These authors suggested that reading may be summed up as a habit that involves reading books, paper-based materials, and electronic resources, each of which affects readers' reading habits differently. The reading habits of students are what enable them to acquire worthwhile knowledge.

Digital technology and the Internet according to Sridhar (2021) have substantially affected the reading process in more than one way. Our capacity to focus, read, or contemplate deeply according to the author is destroyed by digital distractions. According to Eze and Ochagu (2022), this technological innovation is endangering the reading culture, especially among teenagers and secondary school students. Students no longer read for the sake of learning new information; instead, they spend endless hours online, playing with novelty phones, talking, and exchanging short message services (SMSs). The ease with which students may view videos and other online programmes because of the use of YouTube, Facebook, and other websites has resulted in a number of students developing negative attitudes towards academic reading. According to Eze and Ochagu, students' interest in reading is waning while their online time is growing, which is a reason for concern and a problem for everyone. Studies have revealed that young people, most of who are enrolled in secondary and higher education institutions, make up the bulk of Internet users nowadays (Leung, 2015 referenced in Oyewole & Adegoke, 2018).

Literature has, however, shown that the Internet can be used to foster reading and reading habits. In their study, Ntakirutimana and Okoro (2021) discovered that internet

use has a favourable and significant impact on undergraduate students' reading habits at the Adventist University of Central Africa (AUCA) in Rwanda. As a result, using various social media platforms and applications is a crucial component that can encourage undergraduate students to read more. To avoid misuse or disregarding their academic work, students must be cautious and sensible when utilising social media programmes and platforms. According to Ntakirutimana and Okoro, the internet should be used to find relevant information that will improve the students' human capital development and professional and academic advancement.

Statement of the problem

When reading is done frequently, it is viewed as a habit. Even though good reading habits will lead to success in the student's training programme, it has been observed that most students are not reading, talk less of making it a habit. It is important for students to read books regularly as a lifelong learning activity. But with the advent of the internet and the creation of numerous talking and gaming programmes, students' reading habits appear to be suffering. Today's society places a greater emphasis on images and chat than on text and reading. Therefore, it appears that reading habits are declining as a result of the proliferation of electronic media. This is of great concern. Unfortunately, these authors are unaware of any studies on the effects of internet use on reading habits among undergraduate students in private faith-based institutions in Oyo State. This study investigated the effect of internet use on the reading habits of undergraduate students of Ajayi Crowther University, Oyo.

Research questions

The study answers the following research questions:

1. What are the reasons for using the Internet?
2. How much time do students spend online?
3. How would you rate the students' reading habits?

Literature review

In practically every nation on earth, Internet usage has increased significantly during the past ten years. According to Almarabeh, Majdalawi and Mohammad (2016), millions of people are now online, making it the foundation of the information economy. Internet usage greatly increases a person's awareness of the value of their surroundings. It is the most significant information and communication technology that has led to a change in information quality across the globe. Millions of people are openly connected via this worldwide network of connections. Internet is used at home, on the job and at school to conduct many of our daily activities.

Examining data from a December 1998 supplement to the U. S. Current Population Survey (CPS), Schau (2000) found that Internet use varies by age and education attainment. The author found that the Internet use rate was lowest among older age groups, the 75 and older age group and highest among those aged 18 to 24. Individuals with higher education attainment were found most likely to use the Internet as they are often exposed to computers and the Internet as students and are therefore better equipped with necessary skills to go online.

In higher education, where the Internet has developed into a useful information source for students, it has become a crucial tool. The abundance of knowledge on the Internet also serves as a valuable instructional resource for teachers. Students view the internet as a supplemental information source, according to Akin-Adaramola (2021) and Siraj et al. (2015 referenced in Amponsah, Aboagye, Narh-Kert, Commey-Mintah & Boateng, 2022), which results in improved academic achievement. The fact that most students get pertinent information from the Internet, including educational materials, suggests that they are using it to raise their academic performance. The results of Edem and Ofre's (2010) study, which revealed that students were well aware of the significance of the Internet for the timely acquisition of new information and

knowledge, verified this. Learners also viewed the Internet as a source of general knowledge. According to a study by Olatokun (2008; referenced in Amponsah, Aboagye, Narh-Kert, Commey-Mintah & Boateng, 2022), it encourages the formation of reading habits, which improves academic success. Amponsah, Aboagye, Narh-Kert, Commey-Mintah and Boateng (2022) in their study revealed that internet access influences academic standards among students, as those with internet access showed a higher improvement in academic performance than those without internet access.

Studies have also shown that students spent a lot of time online. Most studies indicated the frequency of use by majority of students to be 'every day' (e.g. Ugwulebo & Okoro, 2016; Hossain & Rahman, 2017; Tezer & Yıldız, 2017; Kumara & Kumar, 2018; Ajanaku, 2019; and Amponsah, Aboagye, Narh-Kert, Commey-Mintah & Boateng, 2022). Internet can be used by individuals and families as a means of communication. According to Sponcil and Gitimu, (2013, referenced in Almarabeh, Majdalawi & Mohammad, 2016) people utilise social media networks, and college students in particular make up a sizable share of users, to connect with peers. Studies (e.g. Olatokun, 2013; Almarabeh, Majdalawi, & Mohammad, 2016; and Ajanaku, 2019) revealed that internet is often used for reading news, mailing, watching and downloading songs and videos, software download, playing games, buying products online, online chatting with old and new friends, social networking websites, studying, information gathering and searching. It has also been revealed in studies (e.g. Ajanaku, 2019; Amponsah, Aboagye, Narh-Kert, Commey-Mintah & Boateng, 2022) that access to the Internet is usually through mobile phones, household Internet facilities, school ICT laboratory and public Internet cafes.

The duration of internet connection by students have also been revealed in studies (e.g. Hossain & Rahman, 2017; Talaue, AlSaad, AlRushaidan, AlHugail & AlFahhad, 2018 and Tezer & Yıldız, 2017). For example, in the study

that surveyed the internet usage among university students coming from Business Studies, Science and Arts disciplines at University of Dhaka, Bangladesh, Hossain and Rahman found that majority of the students spent 10 to 20 hours per week. Talaue, AlSaad, AlRushaidan, AlHugail and AlFahhad (2018) in their assessment of the impact of social media on academic performance of selected college students found that majority (23, 38.3%) of the students spent on average 4 to 6 hours per day, while Tezer & Yıldız in their study to determine the relationship between university students' frequency of internet use, duration of internet connection, environments that they connect to the internet, duration use of mobile devices, frequency of social networking leisure activities and internet addiction levels found that majority of the students spent 3 to 4 hours every day on the Internet.

It has also been discovered that internet use has a favourable and significant impact on undergraduate students' reading habits (Ntakirutimana & Okoro, 2021). Some of the respondents affirmed improved reading habits as a result of the use of the Internet in the study by Olatokun (2008) which investigated access and patterns of use of the Internet among secondary school students in Ibadan. Majority (42.2%) of the students also had a positive opinion with respect to the impact of ICT on reading habits in a study conducted by Kumara and Kumar (2019). They believed they can get maximum information on different subjects from the Internet. Bana's (2020) study of students' perception of using the Internet to develop reading habits also showed that 43% of the respondents had a positive perception that the internet developed their reading habits. The same positive perception was expressed by students in a study by Ogunmodede and Sawyerr-George (2023) that investigated digital resources (DRs) and the reading habits of university students in Nigeria. Although Onyeje, Nwankwo, Nnama and Ogoke's (2022) study also revealed a significant influence of internet use on the reading habits of the respondents however, their study found that the internet had a

significant negative impact on the reading habits of nursing students as they spent most of their time on non-academic activities. This implies that as long as students use the Internet for academic related activities, they will continue to experience improvement in their reading habits.

The review makes it abundantly evident that the Internet has grown to be a significant source of information of all kinds, considerably expanding its use. This has had a significant impact on students, especially those between the ages of 18 and 24, who are more likely to stay connected every day and put in 10 to 20 hours per week or more. Given that studies have shown that most students use the Internet primarily for academic purposes, the length of time they are connected to it is a good indicator of how important it is to their development as human capital. This was also seen in the students' favourable perceptions of its influence on reading habits. It means that it must be used for academic-related tasks in order to have a major impact on students' reading habits.

Methodology

The study's methodology is a descriptive survey design that has been employed effectively in related

investigations (Quadri & Abomoge, 2013; Onyeje, Nwankwo, Nnama & Ogoke 2022). Three thousand three hundred and eighty-eight (3,388) undergraduates made up the study's population from eleven faculties of the private, faith-based Ajayi Crowther University, with levels of study ranging from 100 to 500. Three hundred and thirty-eight (338) undergraduate students were chosen using a simple random selection procedure.

The 52-item questionnaire that served as the data collection tool used a four-point scale - Strongly Agree (SA) = 4, Agree (A) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2, and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1 - to extract pertinent data. To ascertain that the items on the questionnaire are consistent with the main objectives of the study, face and content validity testing was carried out on it. A total of 338 questionnaires were personally administered, collected and found usable constituting a 100% return rate.

The data collected were statistically analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) application. The frequency count, mean, and standard deviation descriptive statistics tools were employed. These were used to describe the demographic features and address the study questions.

Findings from the study

Characteristics of the Respondents' Demographics

Table 1: Characteristics of the Respondents' Demographics

S/N	Faculty	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
1.	Law	30	8.9	8.9
2.	Basic Medical Sciences	22	5.5	15.4
3.	Communication and Media Studies	44	13.0	28.4
4.	Humanities	44	13.0	41.4
5.	Social Sciences	24	7.1	48.5
6.	Engineering	35	10.4	58.9
7.	Natural Sciences	60	17.8	76.6
8.	Management Sciences	36	10.7	87.3
9.	Environmental Studies	19	5.6	92.9

10.	Agriculture	6	1.8	94.7
11.	Education	18	5.3	100.00
Total		338	100.0	
	Gender			
12.	Male	125	37.0	37.0
13.	Female	213	63.0	100.0
Total		338	100.0	
	Age Group			
1.	16-20years	187	55.3	55.3
2.	21-25years	138	40.8	96.2
3.	26-30years	9	2.7	98.8
4.	31-35years	2	0.6	99.4
5.	36-40years	1	0.3	99.7
6.	Above 40	1	0.3	100.0
Total		338	100.0	
	Level			
1.	100	31	9.2	9.2
2.	200	134	39.6	48.8
3.	300	90	26.6	75.4
4.	400	61	18.0	93.5
5.	500	22	6.5	100.0
Total		338	100.0	

The demographic breakdown of the respondents is shown in Table 1 above. There were 60 respondents, or 17.8%, from the faculty of natural sciences. The faculty of agriculture had the least number of responses (6, 1.8%). There were more female respondents (213, 63%) than male (125, 37%). The majority of respondents (134, 39.6%) were in the 200 level of study. The respondents were mostly between the ages 16 to 20 (187, 55.3%). This is followed by respondents between the ages 21 to 25 years (138, 40.8%).

Reasons for Internet use

Research question 1: What are the reasons for using the Internet?

Table 2: Reasons for Internet Use

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std. Deviation
1.	I use the internet for study purposes	80 (23.7%)	138 (40.8%)	92 (27.2%)	28 (8.3%)	2.80	.896
2.	I use the internet to do my assignments	85 (25.1%)	150 (44.4%)	88 (26.0%)	15 (4.4%)	2.90	.826
3.	I use the internet for research purposes	96 (28.4%)	131 (38.8%)	81 (24.0%)	30 (8.9%)	2.87	.929

4.	I use the internet to prepare for examinations	93 (27.5%)	142 (42.0%)	88 (26.0%)	15 (4.4%)	2.93	.842
5.	I use the internet to exchange messages with my colleagues	114 (33.7%)	126 (37.3%)	84 (24.9%)	14 (4.1%)	3.01	.868
6.	I use the internet to source educational materials to add to class notes	192 (56.8%)	104 (30.8%)	34 (10.1%)	8 (2.4%)	3.42	.767
7.	I use the internet for personal knowledge	157 (46.4%)	128 (37.9%)	38 (11.2%)	15 (4.4%)	3.26	.829
8.	I use the internet mainly to socialize with friends	150 (44.4%)	122 (36.1%)	47 (13.9%)	19 (5.6%)	3.19	.879
9.	I use the internet to improve my reading habit	181 (53.6%)	114 (33.7%)	32 (9.5%)	11 (3.3%)	3.38	.788
10.	I use the Internet to meet new friends	112 (33.2%)	113 (33.4%)	88 (26.0%)	25 (7.4%)	2.92	.940

The reasons respondents used the Internet are shown in Table 2. Taking into consideration respondents who agreed and strongly agreed, the findings indicated that the Internet's primary application was to source educational materials to add to class notes (296, 87.6%; item 6) with the highest mean value $x = 3.42$, and to develop their reading habits (295, 87.3%; item 9). Many of the respondents also used it for personal knowledge (285, 84.3%; item 7), to do assignments and prepare for examinations (235, 69.5%; item 2 & 4), for study purposes (218, 64.5%; item 1) and for research purposes (227, 67.2%; item 3), to socialise with friends (272, 80.5%; item 8), to exchange messages with colleagues (240, 71%; item 5) and to meet new friends (225, 66.6%; item 10).

The findings indicated that the primary use of the Internet was to source educational/instructional materials and cultivate reading habits.

The duration of time spent online

Research question 2: How much time do students spend online?

Table 3: Time spent using the Internet

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std. Deviation
1.	I spend less than 1 hour daily on the internet	91 (26.9%)	86 (25.4%)	105 (31.1%)	56 (16.6%)	2.63	1.052
2.	I spend between 1 to 5 hours daily on the internet	95 (28.1%)	110 (32.5%)	94 (27.8%)	39 (11.5%)	2.77	.986
3.	I spend between 5 to 10 hours daily on the internet	99 (29.3%)	119 (35.2%)	91 (26.9%)	29 (8.6%)	2.85	.941

4.	I spend between 10 to 20 hours per week on the internet	155 (45.9%)	121 (35.8%)	41 (12.1%)	21 (6.2%)	3.21	.886
5.	I spend 21 to 40 hours per week on the internet	105 (31.1%)	151 (44.7%)	49 (14.5%)	33 (9.8%)	2.97	.921

The duration of time respondents spent online is shown in Table 3. Taking into consideration respondents who agreed and strongly agreed, it showed the majority of the respondents (276, 81.7%; item 4) spent between 10 to 20 hours per week on the Internet with the highest mean value, $x = 3.21$. Two hundred and fifty-six (75.8%; item 5) spent between 21 to 40 hours per week on the internet, two hundred and eighteen, 218 (64.5%; item 3) spent between 5 to 10 hours daily on the internet, and two hundred and five, 205 (60.6%; item 2) spent between 1 to 5 hours daily on the internet. Only a few respondents spent less than 1 hour daily on the internet (177, 52.3%; item 1).

As the data analysis revealed, the respondents spent a lot of time staying connected to the Internet using 10 to 40 hours per week and at least 1 to 5 hours per day.

Students' reading habits

Research question 3: How would you rate the students' reading habits?

Table 4: Students' Reading Habits

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std. Deviation
1.	I make a master schedule for each semester	92 (27.2%)	212 (62.7%)	23 (6.8%)	11 (3.3%)	3.14	.673
2.	I create time to exercise and socialize with friends	136 (40.2%)	170 (50.3%)	21 (6.2%)	11 (3.3%)	3.28	.721
3.	I read at least 2 hours for every hour in class	90 (26.6%)	172 (50.9%)	56 (16.6%)	20 (5.9%)	2.98	.819
4.	I get at least 6 hours of sleep each night	92 (27.2%)	160 (47.3%)	64 (18.9%)	22 (6.5%)	2.95	.850
5.	I get my assignment done on time	50 (14.8%)	144 (42.6%)	107 (31.7%)	37 (10.9%)	2.61	.872
6.	I regularly go to the library to read	66 (19.5%)	177 (52.4%)	59 (17.5%)	36 (10.7%)	2.81	.869
7.	I regularly read at the same time	52 (15.4%)	138 (40.8%)	111 (32.8%)	37 (10.9%)	2.61	.876
8.	I have an area where I go always to read	120 (35.5%)	161 (47.6%)	35 (10.4%)	22 (6.5%)	3.12	.840
9.	I read in an area free of noise and distractions	100 (29.6%)	168 (49.7%)	42 (12.4%)	28 (8.3%)	3.01	.868
10.	I have all my supplies near me when I read	121 (35.8%)	165 (48.8%)	30 (8.9%)	22 (6.5%)	3.14	.831

11.	I read in a comfortable place	109 (32.2%)	131 (38.8%)	59 (17.5%)	39 (11.5%)	2.92	.977
12.	I can read for at least 30 minutes without getting up, moving around, chatting, or taking breaks to eat something or check my phone.	92 (27.2%)	164 (48.5%)	48 (14.5%)	34 (10.1%)	2.98	.902
13.	I have friends that leave me alone when they know I want to read	66 (19.5%)	111 (32.8%)	94 (27.8%)	67 (19.8%)	2.52	1.020
14.	I use my time between classes to read	83 (24.6%)	151 (44.7%)	65 (19.2%)	39 (11.5%)	2.82	.933
15.	I read and study history at a rate of 12 to 15 pages each hour.	45 (13.3%)	104 (30.8%)	119 (35.2%)	70 (20.7%)	2.37	.957
16.	I read regularly for all of my classes, and I read the material in advance of lectures.	94 (27.8%)	147 (43.5%)	73 (21.6%)	24 (7.1%)	2.92	.880
17.	I read with focus and fully comprehend what I read without going back and doing a second or third reading.	98 (29.0%)	146 (43.2%)	47 (13.9%)	47 (13.9%)	2.87	.986
18.	I read the headings and chapter online first when reading a text	122 (36.1%)	148 (43.8%)	37 (10.9%)	31 (9.2%)	3.07	.914
19.	If I am reading for a scientific, social science, or literature class, I change my reading habits.	116 (34.3%)	174 (51.5%)	33 (9.8%)	15 (4.4%)	3.16	.772
20.	I read during the time of day when I am most alert	73 (21.6%)	149 (44.1%)	96 (28.4%)	20 (5.9%)	2.81	.839
21.	I read at my scheduled time without being distracted by anything.	70 (20.7%)	137 (40.5%)	106 (31.4%)	25 (7.4%)	2.75	.868

Table 4 shows the responses of respondents on reading habits. Taking into consideration respondents who strongly agreed and agreed, good reading habits were found among more than half of the respondents. These respondents change their reading styles when reading (290, 85.8%; item 19); have areas where they go always to read (281, 83.1%; item 8); read in an area free of noise and distractions (268, 79.3%; item 9); read the headings and chapter online first when reading a text (270, 79.9%; item 18); get at least six hours of sleep every night (250, 74.5%;

item 4); read for at least two hours for every hour in class (262, 77.5%; item 3); pay attention to and comprehend the readings without rereading them (244, 72.2%; item 17); keep up with the reading for all their classes and have the materials read before lectures (241, 71.3%; item 16); use their time between classes to read (234, 69.3%; item 14); read during the time of day when they are most alert (222, 65.7%; item 20); read at the scheduled time without being distracted (207, 61.2%; item 21); and regularly read at the same time (190, 56.2%; item 7). The data also revealed that

most respondents (306, 90.5%; item 2) with the highest mean value, $x = 3.28$ make time for exercise and socialising with friends. It showed that some respondents (149, 44.1%; item 15) with the lowest value, $x = 2.37$ read and study at a rate of 12 to 15 pages per hour.

These findings indicated that majority of the respondents have good reading habits.

Summary of findings

The results of this investigation showed that:

1. Respondents primarily utilised the internet to find instructional materials and cultivate reading habits,
2. Respondents spent a lot of time on the Internet using 10 to 40 hours per week and at least 1 to 5 hours per day, and
3. Respondents had good reading habits.

Discussion of findings

The findings from the study showing that the internet is used mainly to source educational materials are consistent with studies by Quadri and Abomoge (2013), Iwighrehweta and Igere (2014) and Apuke and Tunca (2022). According to Quadri and Abomoge, respondents utilised the Internet for project work, research, and exam preparation. According to this study, 86 (43.7%) of the respondents utilised the Internet for examination purposes, compared to 77 (39.1%) of the respondents from OAU who used it for research. Fifty-five (55) respondents (27.9%) from U.I. utilised the Internet for project work, while 11 respondents (6.1%) used it for research. Study by Iwighrehweta and Igere revealed respondents claiming that the internet has helped them become more exam-ready. According to Apuke and Tunca, students believed that using the internet has improved their ability to prepare for examinations, complete multiple assignments, widen their areas of interest in reading and learning, and encourage peer learning and self-learning.

The findings showing that respondents use the Internet to develop their reading habits is also in agreement with studies by Olatokun (2008), Kumara and Kumar (2018), Bana (2020), Onyeje, Nwankwo, Nnama and Ogoke (2022) and Ogunbodede and Sawyerr-George, (2023). In Olatokun's (2008) study, learners saw the internet as an aid in developing their reading habits. In their study, Kumara and Kumar (2018) discovered that the majority of respondents had favourable opinions about how ICT had affected their reading habits. The majority of the students (42.2%) were of the opinion that they get maximum information on different subjects while a number of them (40.9%) were of the opinion that they can download books available on the web. In Bana's survey, 43% of participants were found to have a favourable opinion of how the internet changed their reading habits. Onyeje, Nwankwo, Nnama and Ogoke (2022) found that respondents' internet use had a considerable impact on their reading habits, with a mean score of 3.12. Ogunbodede & Sawyerr-George, (2023) also found that students had positive perceptions of the impacts of Digital Resources usage on their reading habits. Their study showed a significant relationship between Digital Resources and the reading habit even as Eze and Ochagu (2022) also found a significant relationship between internet usage and reading culture.

On the amount of time spent staying connected to the internet, the findings showing respondents used between 10 to 40 hours per week on the Internet are also consistent with previous studies. For example, Snyder, Li, O'Brien and Howard's (2015) study revealed that respondents spent more than 25 hours per week on the Internet for non-school or non-work-related activities. The study by Ugwulebo and Okoro (2016) revealed that one hundred and eleven (111) respondents (55%) use the Internet daily. Tezer and Yildiz's (2017) study also revealed internet use frequency to be every day throughout the week. According to the study, students frequently used their home computers to stay connected to the internet, and "Always" was cited as the usage frequency for social media and

mobile devices. Varga's (2020) study revealed that users log in an average of 6 hours and 42 minutes every day, or more than 100 days annually. These showed respondents enjoyed using the Internet more than reading. However, it is at variance with Fatema, Nasreen, Parvez, and Rahaman's (2020) study that found the majority of students used the internet for between 0 to 4 hours per day.

Since society has come to understand the value of knowledge and efficient communication for surviving and taking advantage of their surroundings, it is critical to cultivate good reading habits. A good reading habit opens an opportunity for greater achievements. The findings showing respondents had good reading habits is consistent with a previous study by Iftanti (2015). The study revealed good reading habits in EFL students. It is, however, inconsistent with studies that found a decline in reading habits. In the study by Koroglu and Guzel (201?), 83.9% of the students think that their reading habit is not enough for their profession. Low reading habits as a result of Internet use are also revealed by Owusu-Acheaw (2015). This may be because they were using it for non educational purposes. This was corroborated by Zeleke and Kibret's (2022) study, which found that more than 67% of the students assessed used social media for non-educational purposes. These students spent more time on social media than those that used social media for educational purposes. When compared with those who used social media for non-educational purposes, those who utilised it for educational purposes performed much better on the three tests.

Conclusion

The Internet is the most widespread and rapidly adopted technology globally. It has not only transformed the ways we find, locate and use information as well as relate with each other but has also transformed the education landscape. Its use is therefore not entirely bad. According to the findings of this study, students' reading habits were significantly improved as they used the Internet mainly to source educational/instructional materials to add to class

notes, do assignments and prepare for examinations. This study therefore concluded that students can only cultivate good reading habits if the Internet is used mainly for educational/instructional purposes. In other words, if the Internet is used correctly, it can result in good reading habits. This is due to its ability to, among other things, encourage people to read, lengthen their reading attention span, aid in comprehension, expose them to relevant articles and writings, and generally improve their ability to read.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are given in light of the study's findings:

- i. Information literacy/user education instruction should focus on the benefits of internet use to enhance reading habits.
- ii. The usage of the internet for instructional and/or educational purposes should be promoted among students.
- iii. Parents and guardians should instil good reading habits in their children/wards right from home.
- iv. Institutions should support students in developing better reading habits through improved library collection and organising programmes such as storytelling, reading together, readership promotion campaigns, and formation of reading clubs.

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